

Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council
Minutes
April 21, 2007

Members Present: Bishop Harold Usgaard, Vice president Shirley Gangstad, Secretary BettyAnn Hernke, Treasurer Mark Bradley, Rev. Jim Ahlquist, Ann Beatty, Marcia Blackburn, Rev. Cindy Fisher-Broin, Dorothy Gesme, Rev. Linda Gunderson, Rev. John Henriksen, Rev. Randy Johnson, Craig Nelson, Rev. Scott Olson, Karen Ortloff, John Petersburg, Rev. Richard Spande

Members Absent: Beth Krehbiel

Staff Members Present: Larry Iverson, Deborah Norrie, Recorder

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council met on Saturday, April 21, 2007 at Urland Lutheran Church, Cannon Falls. Rev. Charles Jacobson, interim pastor at Urland, led opening worship with communion at 8:30 AM in the sanctuary. The council enjoyed a time of fellowship following worship and BettyAnn Hernke, a member of Urland, gave a brief history of the congregation.

Rev. John Carrier, Lutheran Campus Ministry Winona, gave a brief report on Lutheran Campus Ministry Minnesota celebrating the 100th anniversary of campus ministry in Minnesota. The council watched a video of campus ministry.

Rev. Joseph Crippen, St. John, Northfield was introduced. Rev. Crippen is a member of the ELCA Church Council and gave a report to the synod council of the recent church council meeting. The council:

- Reported that 2006 was a favorable year financially; ended the year in the black; mission support went up for the first time in a long time
- Received a report that World Hunger gifts reached \$20,000,000 for the first time; we are a church of abundance; we shouldn't be so afraid to do things; we should commit to bold things and try to make a difference in the world; World Hunger stayed strong even during Katrina and the tsunami
- Reviewed business to come before the 2007 Churchwide assembly
 - Resolution to affirm ELW
 - Social statement on education; grounded theologically on our call to vocation
 - Blue ribbon committee on mission support
 - Resolution on HIV/AIDS strategy; move from crisis management to long term management, a more sustainable approach
- Received a feasibility study on fund raising appeal
- Learned Moravian Church full communion was with Northern & Southern Provinces; East/West Indies Province will be added; talking to the Alaska Province
- Received a report on the Lutherans read the Bible – a Book of Faith strategy; two resolutions to the assembly; one thing that would come from this would be a Lutheran study bible;

The business meeting of the synod council was called to order in the Upper Room at Urland Lutheran Church at 11:10 AM by Vice president Shirley Gangstad.

BettyAnn Hernke was called upon to present the minutes of the meeting March 17, 2007. Several typos were noted that will be corrected. A motion was made by Rev. Henriksen, seconded and carried to accept the minutes as corrected.

Voted

SC07.04.01 to accept the minutes of March 17, 2007 as corrected.

Mark Bradley was called upon for the treasurer's report.

1. March Mission Support was \$172,094. The total for the first two months of the year was \$329,542, which was about \$20,000 short of projected income and \$34,000 behind 2006. April income was not available at the time of the meeting.
2. The bank balance was \$210,531.67
3. The February financial report and the March preliminary report were reviewed.
4. The council was informed that the new lease for office space

Ann Beatty made a motion to accept the treasurer's report. The motion was seconded and carried.

Voted

SC07.04.02 to accept the treasurer's report.

Staff reports and team minutes were sent to the council in advance of the meeting. There were no questions of staff.

Karen Ortloff of the Lay & Clergy Leadership Development Team was called on to report on the Councils as Leaders event in March.

- Attendance continues to be good.
- Needs to revise evaluation form to get better information; Comments from people – some people were overly positive; some people were overly negative; she threw those comments out to get a fair evaluation; some of the people who saw everything as negative didn't comment on why it wasn't good. This is not helpful.

Old Business

Bishop Usgaard noted that the Executive Committee has not met since the March council meeting. They will appoint a budget task force at the May meeting.

Discussion of the sabbatical policy was tabled until John Petersburg's arrival.

There was no other old business.

New Business

Executive Committee election.

The constitution calls for the election of two council members to serve on the Executive Committee. John Petersburg and Rev. Cindy Fisher-Broin were both eligible for re-election. Rev. Fisher-Broin declined to serve another year.

Ms. Gangstad polled the lay members of the council. Craig Nelson and John Petersburg said yes to serving. Rev. Linda Gunderson was the only clergy member of the council interested in the Executive Committee.

The council was asked to cast written ballots for the Executive Committee election. Larry Iverson tabulated the ballots. Rev. Linda Gunderson and John Petersburg were elected to the Executive Committee. Elections will be held again at the Synod Council meeting April 5, 2008.

Committee on Candidacy.

The conference representatives to the Committee on Candidacy are nominated by each conference and elected by the synod council. The following names were presented to the council for election: Rev. Joseph Crippen, St. John, Northfield – Cannon River; Rev. Eric Finsand, Chatfield, Chatfield – Root River; and Dr. Noel Peterson, Zumbro, Rochester – Zumbro River. Rev. Cindy Fisher-Broin made a motion to elect those names to the Committee on Candidacy for a six year term.

Voted

SC07.04.03 to approve the election of Rev. Joseph Crippen, Rev. Eric Finsand and Dr. Noel Peterson to a 6 year term on the Committee on Candidacy.

Synod LYO.

Bishop Usgaard report on the LYO gathering held in the Twin Cities in cooperation with the Northwestern Minnesota Synod. Northwestern Minnesota had over 600 youth registered for this event. The Southeastern Minnesota Synod had 25 youth. He took the opportunity while meeting with the youth from this synod to talk about LYO representation on the synod council. The group elected Amanda Neuzil, Trinity, Spring Grove to a one year term on the synod council effective in September.

The bishop also report on the youth and family resolution that will be coming to the synod assembly. That resolution calls for a task force to study youth and family ministry in the synod and bring a report to the 2008 synod assembly. The task force recommendation might result in a synod staff position for youth and family ministry.

On leave from call report.

Bishop Usgaard reviewed the *On leave from call* report and answered the council's questions about the status of people on the list. He noted that a letter had been received from Rev. Jennifer Jarvis-Schroeder late on Friday, April 20th resigning from the roster. He also noted that Rev. Troy Stack-Nelson was requesting a one year extension on his leave because it is family related. Both Christopher Blain and Kenneth Carlson are reaching their expiration date. He will be in consultation with both of them.

Bishop Usgaard made a motion that all pastors and AIMs on the list with the exception of Christopher Blain and Kenneth Carlson be granted another year of on leave from call status. The motion was seconded and carried.

Voted

SC07.04.04 to grant a one year extension of on leave from call status to:

**Rev. David Beckstrom
Rev. Mary Sue Dreier
Rev. Stephen Fiksdal
Elizabeth Gjellstad, AIM
Rev. Anne Hokenstad
Rev. Victor Jortack
Carole Joyce, AIM
Rev. Connie McCallister
Rev. Dennis Pettyjohn
Rev. Daniel Raaen
Rev. Roy H. Rogers
Rev. Troy Stack-Nelson
Rev. Michelle Timm
Rev. Jane Ann Timmerman
Rev. Susan Wallager**

Other New Business.

Global Mission Committee fund appeal.

Bishop Usgaard brought a request from the Global Mission/Companion Synod Committee. The Central Dioceses, Tanzania is creating an educational trust fund. Synod congregations send a lot of money to their partner congregations in Tanzania. This has created conflict in Tanzania when some congregations get money and others don't because they don't have partner congregations.

Synod congregations are being asked to send no more than \$1000 a year. Additional money would go to the education trust fund for scholarships for the entire diocese. The committee will ask congregations to educate students -- \$1.00 per day per student and are asking permission to do this fund raising among all congregations in the synod not just partner congregations.

Rev. Linda Gunderson made motion to approve the request for the fund raising. The motion was seconded and after some discussion, the council voted to approve the motion.

Voted

SC07.04.05 to approve the fund raising request from the Global Mission/Companion Synod Committee for the Tanzanian Education Trust Fund.

Ecumenical representative for the synod.

Bishop Usgaard noted that constitutionally he is responsible for ecumenical relationships in the synod. The ELCA is asking for an ecumenical representative from each synod. Rev. Dr. Elaine Siemsen, Campus ministry Mankato has agreed to serve as this representative.

Bishop Usgaard reviewed the resolutions that have been received for the assembly. Topics include: Salary Guidelines; Youth and family ministry task force; Conference assemblies be held every other year; Congregational support for seminarians; Mission development offering; Minnesota without poverty; and, World hunger – goal of \$500,000 by the end of 2008.

Shirley Gangstad made several announcements:

- Chaplain (Captain) Steve Timm is featured in a Minneapolis Star Tribune article about religious leaders in Iraq.
- Read thank you notes from Campus Ministry Winona and Mankato for the special gift of \$2500
- The final report of the Committee on the Election of a Bishop has been received.
- Council meeting September 7 & 8 will be at Our Savior, Spring Valley
- Council meeting November 17 will be a Messiah, North Mankato
- reported that David Berg resigned from Lutheran Campus Ministry Minnesota Board. The council will need to appoint someone at the next meeting.

John Petersburg arrived and the tabled 2008 Sabbatical Leave policy item was discussed. Mr. Petersburg noted that a section was added to the policy: **IV. Priority for Funding Allocation.** This section clarifies that sabbatical money will be awarded first to rostered staff who have never had a sabbatical; second, to rostered staff who have had sabbaticals if the leave was 7 or more years in the past; and, third, to non-rostered program staff. These awards will be made when funds are sufficient.

Mr. Petersburg made a motion to approve the sabbatical policy as presented. The motion was seconded and carried.

Voted

SC07.04.06 to approve the revised synod sabbatical policy.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 PM. Lunch was served by members of the Urland congregations. Rev. Linda Gunderson led prayer.

Following lunch the synod council teams met.

BettyAnn Hernke, Secretary
Deborah Norrie, Recorder